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a book as I wish some one would write for me about Russia or Rumania or Serbia or even the United States."

Madame Duclaux wrote this book as her particular form of war-work and "out of love and infinite respect for her two countries, the two great countries of Europe". She wears her learning lightly; but he would be an indurated and purblind pedant who should fail to see the wide knowledge, the rich cultivation, the critical competence, and the literary talent which have gone into the making of this volume.

CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN.

Alfred the Great, the Truth Teller, Maker of England, 848-899.

By BEATRICE A. LEES, sometime Tutor of Somerville College, Oxford. [Heroes of the Nations.] (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1919. Pp. xv, 493. \$1.90.)

MISS LEES's biography of Alfred the Great, first published in 1915, has recently (1919) been reissued as a volume in the *Heroes of the Nations* series, for which the work seems to have been originally intended. That a biographical study of the career that "saved England for the English" deserves a prominent place in such a series is beyond dispute. Unfortunately, however, the materials for such a study are scanty and unsatisfactory. Miss Lees has, therefore, construed her task somewhat broadly; she has written a history of Wessex and the adjacent parts of England in the second half of the ninth century. In the first two chapters she discusses the state of Europe and England in the days before Alfred. Three important chapters describe the Alfredian state, the social life of the time, and its notable achievements in art and literature. The work closes with a discussion of the Myth of King Alfred. The remaining six chapters, comprising less than half of the volume, deal more directly with the personal life of the great king.

Without question this biography is the best account of Alfred's reign that has thus far appeared. The available literary sources seem to have been studied with intelligent care, and the author has given due recognition to the interpretations of other scholars who have explored her field, such as Chadwick, Plummer, Steenstrup, Stevenson, and others. By a close study of topographical facts and philological evidence Miss Lees has found it possible to determine quite definitely the course of the Danish invasions of southern England in the ninth century and to locate certain battle-fields, the sites of which have been in dispute; *Aclea* she identifies with Ockley (Surrey) and *Ethandune* with Edington (Wilts). She places the year of Alfred's birth at 848 and his death at 899. She holds that he was accepted as overlord by the Welsh and would like to claim a similar honor for him in the Danelaw (pp. 393, 397). Miss Lees does not regard the king's experiment with a navy as wholly successful, but she finds that there are "signs of an organized system of fortification in Wessex and English Mercia in 893", which she is in-

clined to attribute to King Alfred. Her argument that the *fyrð* had an important nucleus of professional warriors and that military service, once a personal duty, had been "modified by a gradual territorialization", is interesting but not wholly conclusive. The author is inclined to doubt the story that King Alfred sent a mission to India; but she calls attention to the fact that India in the Middle Ages was a very broad term, and that the shrine of St. Thomas, to which the English king is said to have promised alms, was not in Hindustan but in Edessa.

The most prominent fact of Alfred's career—his long struggle with the Danes—the author has studied to the last detail. She views the invasions as a part of the great viking attack on Western Europe, and by tracing the fortunes of this movement in the Frankish lands she is able to account for its successes and failures in England. A few maps would have added greatly to the reader's appreciation of this part of the work; Miss Lees has included only two and neither of these is very helpful. The volume also suffers from a poverty of foot-notes. Miss Lees does occasionally cite her authorities but not nearly so often as one would wish or expect.

LAURENCE M. LARSON.

Handboek tot de Staatskundige Geschiedenis van Nederland. Door I. H. GOSSES en N. JAPIKSE. [Nijhoff's Handboeken.] (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1918. Pp. cxxviii +, 524. Guld. 8.50.)

It is difficult to touch the history of Holland without inconsistencies in terminology, so various has been the past and so indeterminate the names applied to the land under successive political aspects. The authors of this handbook acknowledge, at the outset, that their survey begins *before* the beginning. Taking the existing kingdom of Holland in its present territorial extent, its unified administrative existence is certainly a late growth. Yet here Professor Gosses opens his section of the early narrative at 56 B.C., planning to carry it down to the year 1568, at which date Dr. Japikse starts in with his story of the development of the modern state, although that, too, was only present in potentialities. The outbreak of Dutch rebellion against Spanish domination is made a point of departure for the section of the work now brought to completion. The earlier part, that of Professor Gosses, the part whose pages are numbered with Roman numerals, is still unfinished. Dr. Japikse's narrative is contained in parts I.-IV. He presents a clear, well-told outline of the political changes through which the government has passed, down to the crucial year of 1914. There is no diversion into things social, economic, or literary, although the well-selected bibliographical lists contain matter that expands, naturally, into all those phases. Yet narrowed as it is in scope the outline is by no means a dry skeleton of itemized facts. Dr. Japikse has improved wonderfully in